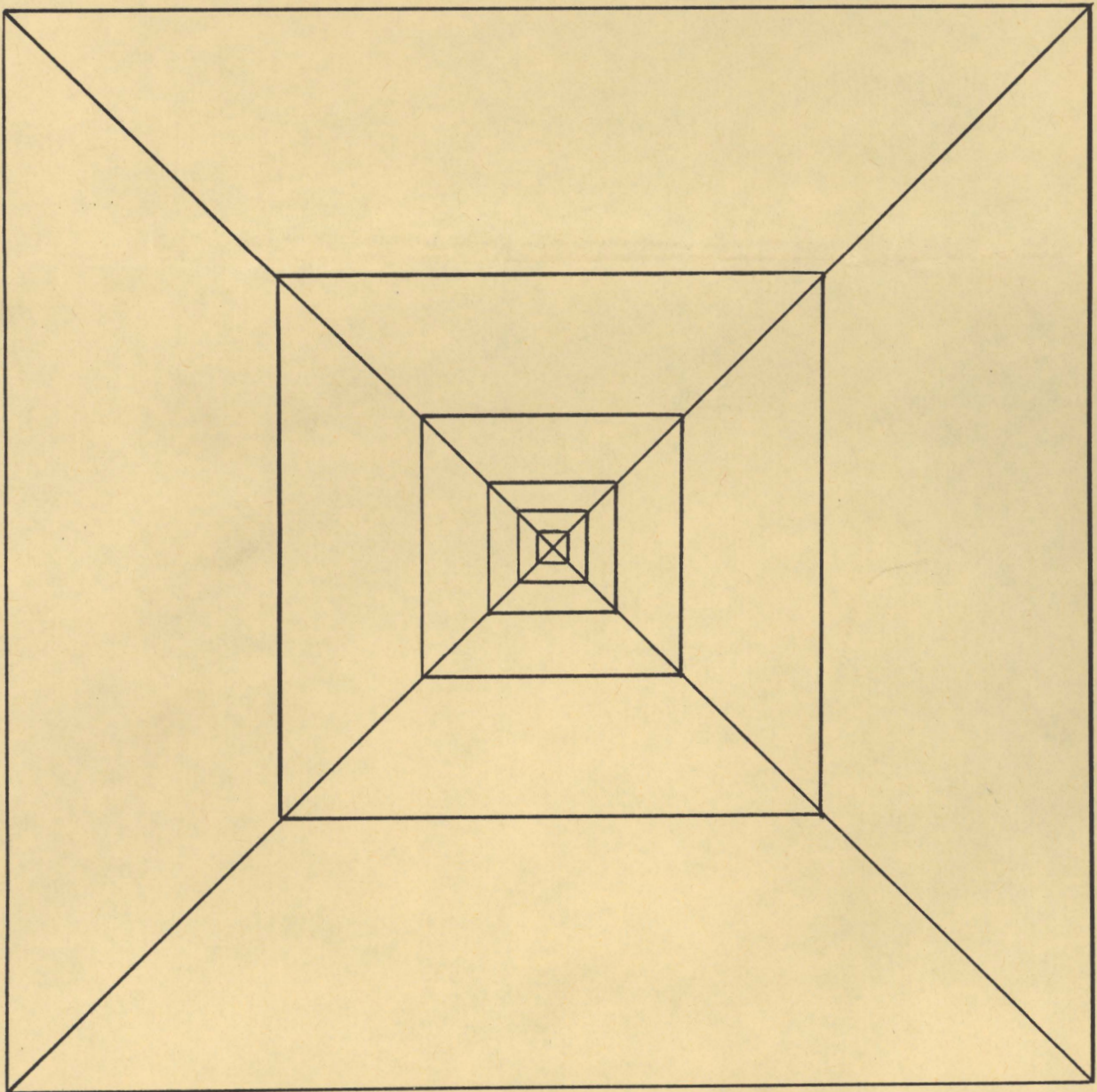


# THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR UFO STUDIES

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Introduction/Editorial

by H. Griesberg & K. Basterfield.

Welcome to the 1980's and "THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR UFO STUDIES". There are a few announcements we'd like to make before we go any further.

As discussed at UFOCON 4, the AUSTRALIAN CO-ORDINATION SECTION OF THE CENTRE FOR UFO STUDIES (ACOS), has changed its name to THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR UFO STUDIES (ACUFOS). With this change, the ACOS BULLETIN has been retitled THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR UFO STUDIES from this issue. The ACUFOS Journal is intended as a vehicle for the publication of researched articles and services available to Australian researchers by Australian researchers, and will concentrate on the publication of original researched papers. In this respect we seek papers of around 2000-3000 words from all researchers. Articles should preferably be in the form of a paper, i.e. have a short abstract at the beginning, followed by the text, source and reference notes. Ideally contributions should be forwarded on A4 sized paper, typed double spaced for ease of retying for publication.

The new "UFO RESEARCH - AUSTRALIA - NEWSLETTER" to be published by Lad Godic of UFOR(SA) Inc. will carry the more popular style articles, newsclips forum, letters etc and as such the ACUFOS JOURNAL and the Newsletter will compliment each other presenting two first class Australian publications of slightly different orientation.

With much regret, we announce that David Seargent is withdrawing as one of our Co-Ordinators. David has contributed much over the past few years, but is now turning to other activities. He will however act as consultant and contributor. Incoming, to replace David, is Keith Basterfield of South Australia, who along with Harry Griesberg will act as Co Co-Ordinator of the Centre. Keith, as most of you will probably know was a past Co-Ordinator of UFOR(SA) and is now Continental Director for Australia & New Zealand for MUFON of the USA.

As such, a firm link between ACUFOS and MUFON exists.

Now for two major announcements.

Firstly, ACUFOS will act as a publishing centre for all Australian researchers who seek an avenue for publishing special projects or case reports. If you have, for example a 20 page report on a case or a 50 page catalogue which you wish to produce, we will offer to take your draft and produce it for you. In this way, we hope to build up a valuable collection of Australian generated material for world wide distribution. For further details please contact us.

Secondly, we announce the establishment of a "RESEARCH FUND" to be maintained by ACUFOS for the benefit of all Australian researchers. The purpose of the fund will be two fold. One, it will be utilised to finance the publishing services mentioned above. Two, if the fund receives enough support, we hope in the long run to be able to accept requests for research funds for specific projects and/or investigation costs involved in high strangeness cases where a rapid investigation response is necessary. Donations of any amount will be accepted by ACUFOS P.O. Box 546 Gosford NSW 2250, and should be made out to ACUFOS RESEARCH FUND, and receipts will be issued. Periodical news of progress of the fund will be issued and when sufficient funds are available, applications for grants will be called for.

As you can see from this introduction, the words for 1980 are "ACTION", "RESEARCH", "PUBLICATION", "DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION", "INCREASED PROFESSIONALISM" and "MUTUAL SUPPORT". We've started the ball rolling, but we need your active participation. Please support Australian Research.

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Guest Editorial.

by David Seargent.

The new year - and the new decade - is going to be a time of change for Australian UFO Research. The new high standard JOURNAL and an autonomous centre for ufo research and investigation prove that we have advanced to a stage comparable with any other country in this field - a very commendable effort when we look back just a few short years to all those "teething problems" of the early 1970's and the lack of official recognition of this study.

It is to be hoped that UFO research not only becomes more serious (as it already has become) but is also seen to become more serious (which it has not become - at least in the eyes of the general public who think that UFO investigators still chase space ships and "flying saucers"). A good journal, and sound research papers, are the best ways these goals can be accomplished.

As you now know, I will not be officially involved in the new CENTRE, but let me say that I am one hundred and one percent behind the project and look forward to seeing new blood infused into UFO research. I am sure that there remains a great deal of potential, yet untapped, among Australian researchers and I feel that the new arrangement will be able to make full use of this.

May I take this opportunity to wish Harry and Keith, and all others involved in this undertaking, the very best of luck and all the success possible in clearing away this mystery.

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The Australian Physical Evidence Study Group (APESG)    by Bill Chalker  
(A research study group affiliated with the Australian Centre for UFO Studies)

The APESG is a loosely knit group of individuals within Australia who are interested in promoting the aims of high quality scientific documentation and research of Physical Evidence for UFO reports.

The APESG was formed in 1979, along lines similar to the AUSTRALIAN ENTITY STUDY GROUP (AESG - a group particularly interested in "entity" related UFO reports



that have occurred in the AUSTRALIAN region). Another specialist group, directed towards studying Australian UFO photographic cases - the AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE ANALYSIS CENTRE (APEAC) - has just been formed and together, these study groups recognise the need for providing focal points of specific research. Through these groups, individuals interested in specific aspects of the UFO phenomenon, can support high quality investigation, research and documentation programmes. All three of these groups - AESG, APESG, APEAC - are affiliated with the Australian Centre for UFO Studies, and can be contacted through the Centre.

The aim of the APESG is to investigate reports where some sort of tangible interaction with the environment is apparent.

#### PHYSICAL EVIDENCE:

Physical Traces and Effects ( ground marks etc.)

Effects On Living Things ( physical, physiological & psychological effects on humans, flora & fauna)

Effects On Human Environment (includes vehicle effects, "EM" cases, instrumental interactions & recordings etc)

Apparent Inertial & Gravitational Effects ( includes apparent violations of physical laws)

#### EXAMPLES OF "PHYSICAL EVIDENCE":

PHYSICAL TRACES & EFFECTS: 1976 - Kettering - ca.25' scorched grass circle after UFO landing.

1977 - Orange - 4 imprints after UFO "landing".

1976 - Neminha - precipitate on car.

1968 - Heyfield - grass wilted at UFO landing site.

EFFECTS ON LIVING THINGS: 1963 - Willow Grove - headache & cows reacted violently & subsequently avoided site.

1932/33 - Nambour - blisters on hands.

1969 - Childers - hairstood on end.

EFFECTS ON HUMAN ENVIRONMENT: 1972 - Murray Bridge - "EM" effect on car.

1944 - Bass Strait - planes instrument affected.

1975 - Lake Sorrell - effect on radio reception.

APPARENT INERTIAL & GRAVITATIONAL EFFECTS: 1966 - Burkes Flat - headlight beams bent towards UFO.

1969 - Casino - "beam" phenomenon.

1967 - Boyup Brook - "car control"

The APESG is also very interested in receiving data on good examples of natural phenomena producing effects similar to those viewed as "physical evidence" for UFO reports (e.g. fungus rings, ball lightning & fireball interactions with environment, etc).

Technically qualified evaluations will be undertaken on all data received, by consultants affiliated directly with the Australian Centre for UFO Studies and by others, enlisted because of their expertise in particular areas pertinent to the assessment of physical evidence.

The group will document and publish studies of such cases, with the eventual aim of providing the UFO research community with comprehensive and authoritative data related to PHYSICAL EVIDENCE for UFOs in Australia. Copies of these publications will be distributed to interested parties at cost and forwarded to all member organisations of the Australian Centre for UFO Studies, free of charge, in exchange for their co-operation in providing data.

Your assistance is sought in bringing our attention to any "physical evidence" cases you may come across and investigate. Information can be directed to either ACUFOS P.O. Box 546 Gosford NSW 2250 or APESG c/o P.O. Box 6 Lane Cove NSW 2066.



PUBLICATIONS: Australia's first comprehensive listing of "physical trace" cases is in preparation. Entitled "A SOURCE BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN UFO RELATED PHYSICAL TRACE EVENTS AND OTHER RELATED SIMILAR PHENOMENA", it is being compiled by Bill Chalker. Copies of the paper "PHYSICAL EVIDENCE FOR UFOS IN AUSTRALIA - a preliminary study of the Physical Trace Experience in Australia" by Bill Chalker, presented at UFOCON 4, 1979, are available from the author, c/o P.O. Box 6 Lane Cove NSW 2066.

The APESG will concentrate on detailed "case documents" of Australian PHYSICAL EVIDENCE cases and as these become available they will be sent to all member organisations of the ACUFOS, free of charge, in exchange for their co-operation in providing material.

A periodic newsletter - "APESG UPDATE" - compiled by Bill Chalker, will be circulated to interested parties and all ACUFOS affiliated groups. It will carry updates on APESG research activities, Australian & overseas "physical evidence" cases, science/technology applied to "physical evidence" and literature reviews. The newsletter will hopefully encourage dialogue on the question of physical evidence for UFO reports in Australia, the results of which, of course will be included in it.

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Imagery as a Possible Psychological Explanation for Reported Close Encounters with the UFO Phenomenon.

by Keith Basterfield.

Abstract: A ten year study of reported observations of UFOs shows there is a class of currently inexplicable events which may be explainable in terms of known psychological processes.

Introduction: The great majority of reported observations of UFOs are explainable in conventional terms once commonsense investigation has taken place. Aircraft, Satellites, Weather Balloons, Clouds, the Moon, the Sun, Stars, Planets and Meteors have all been the cause of reports from people caught either by something which they haven't previously observed or by an unexpected or unusual aspect of viewing.

Ground markings reportedly associated with UFOs have been caused by fungus, slime mould, leaf smut, animals, whirl-winds, helicopters and hoaxes.

Even photographs have fallen to the use of sophisticated computer technology which has now eliminated all but a few of the more than 1000 photographs known to have been investigated since 1947.

Radar 'evidence' has been confused by the lack of understanding that even in this medium the human element of interpretation still comes into play and that other cases can be eliminated by the words "anomalous propagation". The January 1979 New Zealand radar reports in association with two movie films represents the point in question. The New Zealand government declared the radar targets to be due to faulty equipment and anomalous propagation effects. The second film was said to be Venus and doubt was cast on the initial film as being of little scientific value.

The residue left after the above explanation have been taken into account are a few photographs which have passed computer analysis, a small group of physical trace cases and a larger number of close encounters where verbal testimony is the only evidence available.

It is this latter group of reports which will be the subject of this paper.

The events: The following examples of reported encounters will illustrate the typical event under consideration.

Gum Creek, South Australia (1964).

A farmer's wife lying awake at 2 a.m. noticed a "figure" suddenly appear outside the bedroom window, as if "a movie screen had been unrolled". The scene seemed very bright as if daylight and the entity was revealed in great detail because of the unusual lighting. The male figure appeared to be taking 'photographs', then advanced towards the window. The lady wanted to speak to the figure but found she couldn't. She slipped down into bed and fell asleep. It was conjectured by her that the lighting came from an object above the house. No traces were found.

Sandford, Tasmania (1978)

Awakening due to a dog barking a woman rose at 11.50 p.m. and looked out of the window. She noticed a "doorway" of white light cut on the rough, front driveway. It was dark everywhere else surrounding the "door". However through and only through the "door" she could see the drive as if it were lit up by daylight. Then a golden glow spread from the door and both went out instantly. No traces were found.

Boyup Brook, West Australia (1967)

A man was driving alone at 9.30 p.m. doing a steady 100kph, suddenly became aware of the approach of a lighted object from the air. The car was immediately "stopped dead" and all electrical systems ceased to function. There was no feeling of deceleration at all. Looking up he reported seeing an iridescent blue oval over the car with a tube of light extending down onto the car. After an estimated 5 minutes, the object left and he found himself travelling along at 100 kph again with all systems working and no feeling of acceleration. His watch was later reportedly found to be 5 minutes slow.

Prospect, South Australia (1977)

At 1 a.m. whilst driving alone, a 19-year-old-man claimed he was abducted from his car and taken into an object where weird entities were observed. He was then returned to his vehicle and found himself still travelling at speed.

An inspection of a large (300) sample of such close encounters mainly within Australia lead to the conclusion that most are reported to occur in rural or isolated localities, at night, mainly with only one person present, frequently when they are driving a vehicle. There are 'peaks' in the times of reports, namely 8-10 p.m. and 2-4 a.m. The type of objects reported varies tremendously, and in some cases a humanoid "figure" is described in association with the UFO. There are physically inexplicable events described such as "materialisation", cars being "taken over" from the drivers' control and abduction stories of medical examinations.

In attempting to determine if there was a real event without resort to the extra-terrestrial hypothesis or other more fanciful theories, two cases caught my attention. Details follow.

Ivy Tanks, South Australia (1973)

A lady was travelling as a passenger in a semi-trailer and decided to go to sleep at 2 a.m. About 3 a.m. she heard a warm male voice calling her name and telling her to look out the window. By the side of the road she saw an egg-shaped object surrounded by a "force field". The entire thing was alight with a white glow which seemed to come from all over and inside it. She feels the oval may have been semi-transparent. This illumination was so good that she was at a loss to compare the colour and glow to anything she could think of. Although the viewing time was short (5 seconds) much detail was noted. Two figures were visible associated with the object. The "force field" glow died down in an inexplicable manner. She woke up feeling fresh and upon questioning the driver found he had seen nothing.

Frankston, Victoria (1972)

Whilst driving home a 37 year old housewife encountered a large silver-blue iridescent object hovering over her car. Twenty two days later a similar



or the same object appeared over her car at the same location. Suddenly the car's engine cut off and couldn't be restarted. She tried the steering wheel, pumped the brake and changed gear, all to no avail. The car "controlled itself" to the side of the road and stopped. All sound drained out of the air and she was told three things. The engine then started itself and she drove to a police station and reported the incident. Later a mental message told her to return to the spot. On the way, a man "materialised" then later "dematerialised" inside her car. Meeting two other people at the spot she again saw this "man" then lapsed into unconsciousness and whilst physically in the presence of two people who saw none of this, she described being taken inside a "room". There was no visible sign of illumination yet the room was well lit. She then recovered in the car. Other odd psychic events occurred at around this time, eg. voices in her head. She was regarded as an average, normal healthy person by those who knew her.

As will be noted from these two reports, there are items which we would consider impossible, cars do not take over control of themselves and materialisation is not an everyday practice. Remember though we are not talking of cranks or crackpots here, we are speaking of credible, reliable, healthy, average persons who stood up to rigorous cross examinations. These events are single or at most multiple over a period of 6 months in an entire life time, not constantly repeated unlike so called "contactee" claims. A court would have no doubt about the status of these people as reliable witnesses.

A literature search revealed that there are known psychological phenomena which are still not fully understood (as far as a mechanism goes) which seem to provide a possible examination for these events. These are hypnopompic and hypnagogic imagery (1).

Hypnopompic imagery was so named by Alfred Maury in 1848. Maury perceived "faces" in the dark. Both types of imagery most often occur with the eyes closed but may also occur in a darkened environment with the eyes open. McKellar (1972) reports encountering individuals who reported remarkably similar imagery which occurred when they were fully awake.

The imagery content is visual, or auditory in the main but may also include sensation of heat/cold, smell or touch. They may be reproductions of the events of the day or strange, bizarre images of pleasing or frightening proportions. Little control seems to be able to be had over their appearance, and thus a person could certainly be frightened by their sudden onset. Reality and images of this kind can be readily confused. One of the most basic auditory images is that of hearing one's name called. You may recall instances where sleeping or dozing waiting for a morning call to breakfast, you hear your name called and obediently trot into the kitchen only to find a half cooked breakfast and a puzzled chef.

Visual images range from simple (patches of colour) to integrated and complex scenes. Objects can be "strange" or noticed from an unusual angle with sometimes an unusual clarity of detail. Durations range from seconds to minutes. Persons experiencing these images comment on the unusual intensity of colour and lights using such phrases as "strange luminosity" and "glow of the Sun".

Surveys which have been done have lead to speculation that such imagery is experienced by all but denied by some as some deny having dreams. The incidence of imagery amongst the population has been found to range from 50-70% with events occurring to a number either nightly or regular experienced on at least half the nights.

As an example of just how "real" these images can be, an instance quoted by McKellar (1968) is of note. A young couple had a routine of the wife getting breakfast ready for her husband and then seeing him off to work. One morning she recalled getting out of bed, washing, dressing, getting breakfast and then kissing her husband goodbye. At this point she "woke" up, still in bed to find her husband kissing her goodbye. She had been asleep in bed all the time until that point.

Green and McCreery (1975) related what they called type two awakenings where we find people awakening normally to find themselves in bed. The surroundings at first appear normal but then become unusual or uncanny. Alternatively they may awake immediately to a stressed or stormy feeling. In either case they may

experience fear, panic or an hallucination or apparitional effect. This may also be accompanied by a seeming paralysis of the body or an "out of body" state.

To an outside observer the person would appear asleep, lying with eyes closed. Occasionally type two false awakenings are simply the sensation of awakening, then really awakening.

Table 1 compares characteristics of UFO events and imagery.

I would suggest that events such as Ivy Tanks (1973) Gum Creek (1964) and Sandford (1978) are imagery caused as they occurred on the awake/asleep interface where we know imagery occurs.

The accounts of the Boyup Brook (1967), Prospect (1977) and Frankston (1972) cases contain the same basic elements and occurred to persons travelling alone in an environment of unrelieved nature, i.e. driving along a relatively isolated road where one would have the probability of being in relaxed wakefulness on the sleep/awake interface.

There are hundreds of such events described in the ufo literature which the "image" hypothesis appears to be able to satisfactorily explain.

About 100 cases exist on record where people claim to have been "abducted" by aliens and subjected to a medical examination on board a UFO. An examination of 25 cases in depth indicated strong correlation with the types of event already discussed. There are the same basic details present, except these abduction events result in a more convinced reporter with seeming physiological and physical traces, e.g. glazed eyes, needle puncture marks. However, many cases occur where the witnesses claim to have been awakened from sleep or travelling in a vehicle where image conditions are optimum.

One abduction case (Calgary, Canada, 1967) presents a further pointer to this hypothesis being credible. A boy on a three minute walk between two houses along a paddock arrived home in a daze. Under hypnosis he revealed he heard a high pitched noise, looked up and saw an object. He was taken up into it and medically examined. However the hypnotist believed that the incident was actually a subconscious memory recall of an earlier appendectomy operation.

Physiological and physical occurrences in people might have a parallel with the medically recognised "hysterical conversion". Hysteria is recognised as an illness resulting from emotional conflict and is classically manifested by dramatic physical symptoms involving the voluntary muscles or the organ of special senses. During the process of conversion unconscious impulses are transmitted into bodily symptoms. The emotional conflict is expressed physically e.g. facial swelling, tunnel vision or shock.

#### Mechanism.

Although we accept imagery as occurring we are still not certain of its mechanism. EEG experiments reveal that creative imagery is connected with the Theta brain wave pattern and that excess theta may be evident in schizophrenics and psychoneurotics. Victims of the former can withdraw into fantasies and hallucinations. Much more investigation needs to be performed and it would be premature to speculate on the possible mechanism here beyond reporting that Ferguson (1973) describes how William Dent and associates of Stanford University looked at neural discharges - PGO (pontine-geniculo-occipital) spikes which occur most heavily (but not exclusively) during paradoxical sleep. These bursts are though possible to bring on the intense visual imagery associated with REM (rapid eye movement) sleep.

If abnormal discharges of this kind occur to normal, healthy people at other than REM sleep periods this might prove to be a possible mechanism.

If these encounters are in fact images we would need to address ourselves to the question of why the form of imagery is metallic spaceships and entities. Surely imagery has been with us through the years?

Looking back through time we do in fact find support. People experienced "visions" and "apparitions" which were reported in a religious context and perhaps became the village oracle or were held to be witches. In the middle



ages we became afraid of elves, hobgoblins and fairies. A percentage of the population could be found who actually reported seeing such creatures in isolated spots, notably during the hours of darkness. Materialisation and dematerialisation of entities was reported. A general belief in all this pervaded all classes of people, with the grass roots of society firmly convinced.

The 20th century brought us a disbelief in such happenings, belief in them was seen as childish. Along came aircraft, rockets, missiles and talk of extra-terrestrial life. Many people today believe life exists outside of the earth. The jump from existence to visitation has been strongly reinforced by science fiction films, books and open discussion on the subject. I would suggest that we have merely moved the content of our imagery from the supernatural to UFOs.

NOTES: (1) The intermediate period between wake and sleep is termed hypnagogic and between sleep and awake hypnopompic.

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TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF IMAGERY VERSUS CLOSE ENCOUNTERS.

IMAGERY	Close Encounters
Occurs on the sleep/awake interface - can occur during day.	Mainly occur at night, often when driving alone or when awoken from sleep during night, few occur during daylight.
Eyes closed, or in a darkened environment usually	Mainly occur in a darkened environment
Little control over the appearance or disappearance	Occur suddenly and unexpectedly and most objects move away at incredible speed.
Vary from simple to complex	Momentary encounters to longer duration abductions
Little control over the content	All sorts of descriptions of objects and aliens. This has been said to be a good reason to disbelieve the ETH
Unusual quality of lighting/colour	Main point brought out by people reporting encounters is the intense lighting and vivid colours of ufus
Healthy normal people are percipients	Normal healthy people report.
Content may be bizzare/unusual	Car stops, car paces, engine failures, weird electrical effects which do not last etc. Seemingly impossible.



The Significance of Early Sightings.by John Prytz.

Erich von Daniken et al have recently popularised the idea of using ancient records, mythology and monuments to "prove" extraterrestrial intervention in human affairs within historical and even pre-historical times. However, the very remoteness in time precludes the speculations from being anything else but. Interesting, but unproveable. Resistance comes obviously from anthropological and archaeological orthodoxy, who can, and have, been able to counter all such speculations with more traditional "down-to-earth" theories. As far as the Establishment of Science is concerned, modern evidence of extraterrestrial visitors is considered necessary to satisfy the Doubting Thomas which is part and parcel of modern scientific methodology. Only then would extrapolation into the past be plausible.

And so it is in ufology. A spectacular sighting so recorded in historical times (Ezekiel et al), even up through the traditional modern beginnings of the UFO mystery in 1947 doesn't carry as much weight in the minds of most as does a very recent, but less spectacular sighting. This is understandable, but perhaps an unnecessary discounting, discarding and ignoring of data. My basic premise is that it might be easier to find the "smoking gun" that would argue the case for the UFO extraterrestrial theory within older sightings than with their modern counterparts.

Pre-1947 sightings have a lot going for them - a lot to recommend. Though scientific ignorance of aerial phenomena increases as one investigates reports further and further back into the distant past, two other factors more than compensate for the fear and superstition that existed then, as for example attributing stars as being nothing more than holes in the firmament. Even so, it could be argued that the average human in older times were more familiar with natural aerial phenomena than their civilized counterparts today, though I won't stress that observation.

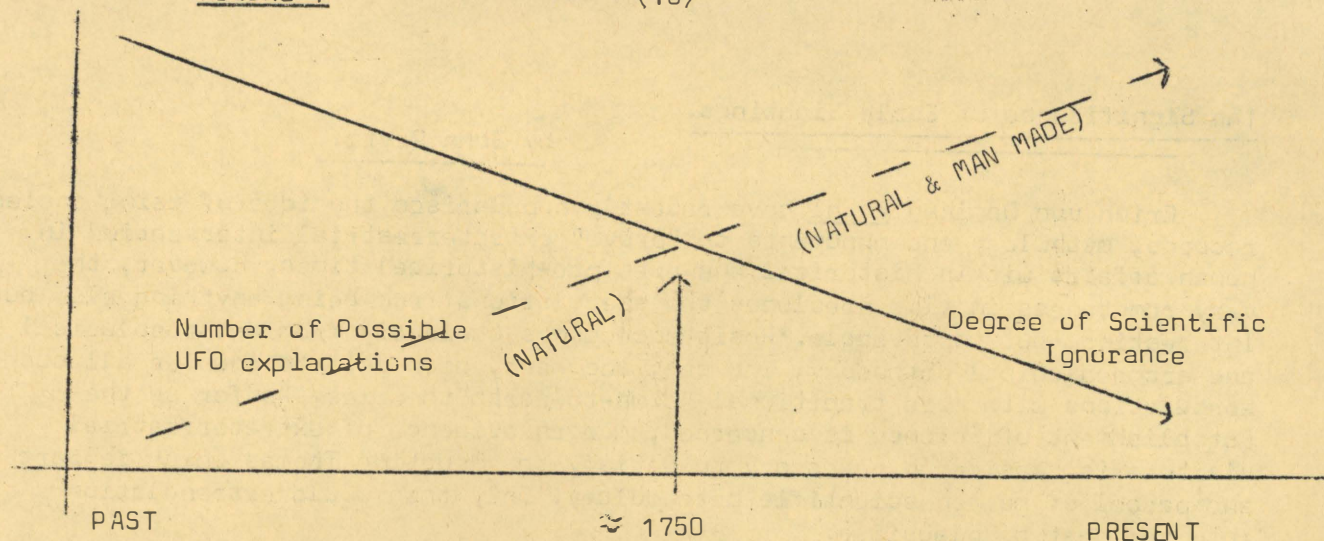
The first factor relates to the range of possible misidentifiable aerial phenomena. This has increased as one moves from ancient to modern times. For example, prior to 1700, only natural aerial phenomena - clouds, rainbows, mock suns and sundogs, rings around the sun and moon, spider webs, glowing insects, meteors, Venus, mirages, other atmospheric effects (twinkling etc.), hallucinations and the aurora borealis and australis - could be argued as possible explanations for ancient UFO sightings. The 1700's (and later 1700's at that) would see the introduction of balloons. Artificial lighting, searchlights (on clouds) and the like wouldn't be viable till the use of electricity became commonplace. Aircraft and associated phenomena like condensation trails weren't possible till the turn of the century (20th) or later, and of course satellites and their associated phenomena (rockets taking off, space debris reentering the atmosphere etc.) didn't enter the picture in a large way till WWII at best and the late 1950's for all practical purposes. The introduction of the hoax wouldn't enter into consideration until the UFO phenomena attained world-wide publicity in 1947.

Thus, even though we can never get ahead of various forms of natural aerial phenomena (ball lightning, St. Elmo's fire etc.) unless somehow due to the introduction of modern civilization, one can get ahead of the wide diversity of man-made phenomena as possible explanations for UFOs. The way to do it of course is by looking at the older UFO reports. Thus, a sighting in the 1870's, that if reported in the 1970's would be suggestive of a satellite crossing the sky, is basically more solid evidence of the existence of something very strange going on. One can quasi-plot that period where decreasing ignorance of natural aerial phenomena matches increasing possibilities of man related explanations to obtain that period that maximizes evidence for UFOs as a unique phenomena in its own right. (Figure 1). I'd guesstimate that time to be within the period of the 1700's, prior to the introduction of the balloon era, yet within the era of scientific investigation as we understand it today.



FIGURE 1

(10)



The second reason that earlier sightings are important is that they more truly may reflect the occurrence of UFO sightings. Since 1947, UFOs have had an aura of ridicule about them, which though lessening, still persists. Phrases like "it can't be therefore it isn't," "flying saucers," "take me to your leader," "silly-season phenomena," and "little green men" testify to the scorn heaped upon UFOs by scientists and to some extent the general public. This condition did not, indeed could not, occur prior to the Arnold 1947 sighting. People seeing unusual sights and objects would be less afraid of ridicule in reporting their experiences, or, of doctoring their reports to conform to their pre-existing beliefs regarding the nature of the UFO phenomena. Beliefs which could not be held prior to the phenomena attaining world-wide coverage in 1947. The "power of suggestion" influence became a factor that must be taken into account with the post-1947 publicity. Hence, earlier coverage of UFO phenomena would have been much more honest and above-board, relative to today.

This is not to suggest however that I believe the data prior to 1947 should be the only information evaluated. Far from it. I do think that older sightings should be investigated (as far as possible), searched out, payed attention to and catalogued far more than is currently the case. They are not of historical interest and idle curiosity only ... then to be disregarded as worthless only because they are old. There is some scientific paydirt to be won from such material; perhaps just enough paydirt to document an iron-clad UFO case to a far greater extent than it is with current sightings given the publicity UFOs have received as well as the above mentioned wider range of possible phenomena that can be used to explain away such UFO sightings.

The UFO question - not yet answered!

by Bill Chalker.

The course taken by the treatment afforded to the recent "radar-visual" UFO sightings in New Zealand, by the media, is symptomatic of the facile attitude generally taken with controversial topics. Much of the popular media embraced the reports with an unrestrained fervour, dressing them up in a rather garish manner, much closer to travesty than to accurate factual reporting.

Adopting the transient accoutrements of pseudo-researchers, journalists immersed themselves in the mystery with gay abandon. The media had apparently taken it upon itself a task more suited for experienced scientific UFO researchers and that part of the scientific community which should be interested in these reports. Since scientific investigations take time and can at times become quite laborious, the media quickly came forth with unsound and unsatisfactory denouncements. If the reports are not amenable to overnight or rapid enquiry, the media soon tires of them. They are then old news and hardly merit further consideration.



While it is too premature to discuss the exact stimuli for all the New Zealand reports, the affair has clearly identified the major problems that plague the UFO phenomenon. These are as follows:

- \* The media are largely ill-equipped to undertake a competent investigation into UFO sightings, let alone quite a number of other topics.
- \* The scientific community is too prone to giving explanations that are generally the product of ill-advised arm chair pontification, normally characterised by implausible and often tortured reasoning, and
- \* "Pseudo"-researchers and self appointed experts, who are prone to interpolating their own pet theories into sightings, are given wide publicity, simply because they are only too willing to make ridiculous and unsubstantiated statements to the media.

All this makes legitimate scientific research into the UFO subject difficult, and at times almost impossible. Contrary to the impression, given wide press of late, the UFO phenomenon is a problem worthy of legitimate scientific examination.

While the wealth of present data does not lend its support to any one clear hypothesis of origin and eventual nature of the UFO reports, it certainly indicates without question (if one takes time to examine the evidence) the existence of a new empirical phenomenon. Contrary to popular opinion there are patterns in UFO reports. Regularities or patterns do in fact occur, and the existence of a regularity is tantamount to the existence of a law. The aim and object of science is the description and analysis of reality by means of the discovery of laws. Laws are only regularities which have been established and to which formal expression has been given. Such discoveries of regularities or patterns in UFO reports then means that the study of UFOs lends itself to legitimate lines of scientific enquiry.

Here in Australia, several civilian research organisations, such as UFO Research (NSW), carry out scientifically orientated investigations into UFO reports. These organisations work on the definition that a UFO constitutes a report of an aerial phenomenon that is not only mystifying to the original witnesses, but remains unidentified after detailed scrutiny of all available evidence by persons who are technically qualified to make a common sense identification if one is possible. They have teams of trained investigators who carry out enquiries, which normally feature on-the-spot interviews with the witnesses. These organisations have consultants in a wide range of scientific disciplines, and accordingly the large number of reports, caused by such wide ranging phenomena as astronomical objects, meteorological phenomena, aircraft, etc, are readily identified.

However, it is the unexplained reports that commands most of the research conducted by the civilian research groups. The unexplained reports, which generally amounts to about 20% of the total received, are examined intensely for patterns and are encoded on an Australian UFO computer file, based in Sydney, which operates in conjunction with "UFOCAT" - a vast computer file, consisting of in excess of 80,000 entries, located in the United States.

If anyone took the time to become familiar with the extent of the UFO phenomenon, both here and abroad, they would, I feel, be astounded that such a body of extraordinary data could remain largely ignored by much of the mainstream scientific community. For example, in Australia alone there is close to 100 cases on file of "UFO landings". That is, reports in which a UFO is actually observed to alight on our soil and interact with the environment, producing physical effects on the ground that can be subsequently studied. Extensive analytical techniques including spectroscopy and thermoluminescence have been applied to many of these cases.

Two such cases occurred at Kettering, Tasmania in 1976 and near Orange, NSW during 1977. In both cases, objects were observed alighting on the ground and leaving behind tangible physical effects after the departure of the UFOs. At Kettering, the grass was killed off and subsequently replaced by a tougher



cutting grass. Four small circular holes in a trapezoid arrangement featured in the Orange case.

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) is officially responsible for conducting investigations into what they refer to as "Unusual Aerial Sightings". Their enquiries have consistently fallen far short of an acceptable scientific study. The RAAF is a sobering example of an institution conducting programmes involving unabashed manipulation of data and drastic paucity of recognisable scientific methodology. The United States Air Force and the American Intelligence community have been grossly at fault in this area, however the RAAF records have many glaring examples of inane and absurd attempts to explain away legitimate reports of UFOs.

Two extraordinary cases were both "explained" as possible "tornado-like meteorological manifestations" by the Department of Defence. The first took place during February 1963, near Moe in Victoria and involved a structured aerial object of which considerable detail could be made out. Farm animals reacted violently to the object's approach and the witness experienced an intense headache. The second "tornado" was discovered resting on a beach near Vaucluse NSW back in July 1965. Once again, considerable detail was observed. With the witness were about a dozen dogs which were barking loudly at the object. When it lifted off the ground, the dogs fell silent. Investigations at the site indicated that something quite unusual had rested there. The Department of Defence would have us believe that in both cases "tornadoes" were at fault. I would suggest that if they were "tornadoes" (and I am saying they are not) then these Australian variations of this meteorological manifestation deserve world wide attention because of their uniqueness.

Science in fact, also has a poor record of involvement in the UFO question. The crowning example of this sorry campaign is the Condon report or "the Scientific Study of UFOs", which was released back in January 1969. The study failed to draw any positive inference from the truly puzzling cases that abounded in this study. The Condon report concluded that there was little scientific merit in studying UFOs and yet we have conclusions such as the following within the report: "This is one of the few UFO reports in which all factors investigated, geometric, psychological, and physical appear to be consistent with the assertion that an extraordinary flying object, silvery, metallic, disc-shaped, tens of meters in diameter, flew within sight of two witnesses." Unfortunately this conclusion given to the McMinnville, Oregon photos is not unique to the study, and yet all such cases were ignored in the overall conclusions of the Condon report.

The winds of change however are evident. Dr. Claude Poher, a scientist with the French equivalent to NASA, read the Condon report and after further detailed study of other cases, came away with the conviction that there was a real problem, that merited close scientific scrutiny. During 1977, the French government formed GEPAN - "Groupe d'Etude des Phenomenes" - an official UFO research group with Dr. Poher as its head. GEPAN has already made its first report, which in summary states that witnesses have really seen the facts they describe, most of the cases could not be explained, witnesses appear to have seen material phenomena, "relative to a flying machine of which the lifting forces and propulsion means are entirely unknown to our knowledge" and that these conclusions are backed up "with our regard to ruling out all doubtful and misinterpretation cases". GEPAN's final conclusion is quite sobering. "Study of such phenomenon seems to us capable of increasing mankind's knowledge for effecting improvement in our techniques. All this has an extensive importance".

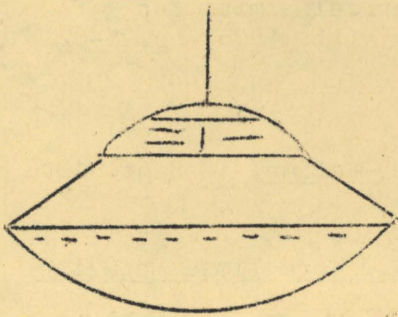
Thomas Kuhn indicated that scientific understanding advances by a series of revolutionary lurches. Each dislocation of the contemporary paradigm, is followed by protracted and often boring periods of consolidation. Just as the scientific community is becoming complacent in its legitimacy, some concept or individual, be it heretical, sublime or ridiculous does it again and the current paradigm is rent asunder.



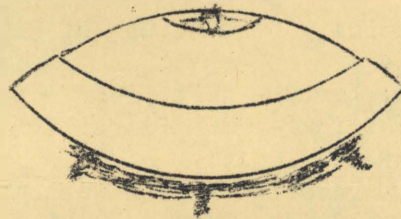
I believe that the data we have on UFOs places us on the edge of such a revolution in scientific thought. The UFO reports are literally screaming out for study. This rogue data base will, I think, in time initiate a severe dislocation in our contemporary and not too complacent paradigm. As Dr. J. A. Hynek, author of the authoritative book "The UFO Experience", has put it, understanding the UFO enigma, should mark a vast new quantum leap in scientific knowledge for mankind.

That indefatigable iconoclast of the first half of this century, Charles Fort put it this way in his "Book of the Damned":

"A procession of the damned.  
By the damned, I mean the excluded.  
We shall have a procession of data that science has excluded.  
Battalions of the accursed,  
captained by pallid data that I have exhumed, will march.  
You'll read them - or they'll march."



The Moe "tornado" - 1963



The Vaucluse "tornado" - 1965

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